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ABSTRACT

A guide for students of all ages anticipating a period of study abroad contains useful information about its benefits, the value of establishing purposes and setting goals, and other matters that would be of concern to the first-time student abroad. Topics discussed are: considerations in the selection of programs for study abroad, ways of gaining background for travel, the need for and means of keeping in touch with those at home, money management, arranging for official documents, ways of preserving memories of the travel, determining what to take along, coping with adjustment and the concerns of daily life in a foreign country, taking advantage of the last few weeks away from home to schedule last activities, and preparing for re-entry. (MSE)

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Planning for Study Abroad

by
Alice K. Swinger

Fastback 228

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Series Editor, Derek L. Burleson

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Introduction

Do you long for the adventure, excitement, and challenge of travel? Can you imagine yourself sailing the fjords of Norway gazing up at the mountains rising out of the sea? Do you yearn to float on the Rhine viewing the castles and vineyards on either side? Or do you dream of walking the Great Wall of China or exploring the Kremlin in Moscow? Whatever your dream, you are not alone.

Every year thousands of students and teachers travel to other countries to study. The travel-study experiences range from college year-abroad programs to a personalized tour planned by a single teacher, from group tours organized by travel agencies and professional associations to academic research at a foreign university. The travel may continue for weeks, months, or a year. It may include one country or many. Travelers may be alone, with family, with a class, or with common-interest groups.

Students and teachers are not alone in their wanderlust. Retired people travel, either as beginners fulfilling long-cherished dreams or as veteran voyagers continuing their favorite pursuit without the constraint of time pulling them back to their jobs. As more industries become involved in international trade and marketing, business people travel with increasing frequency. Other professionals travel to exchange ideas at conferences, to conduct research, and to study.

The variety in the ages, backgrounds, and purposes of people who combine travel and study is endless. Each traveler is different from others in experience, in purposes, in needs, and in wealth; and each study program is

different from others in length, purpose, and cost. Yet some things remain the same.

Whatever the background or purpose of travelers, every trip requires setting goals, planning, and organization. Decisions must be made about where and how to travel. Activities and events must be considered in order of importance or preference. Official travel documents must be secured and financial arrangements completed. Communication networks with family and friends must be established. Advance planning is necessary if travelers are to take advantage of professional opportunities and special events. In addition, thought should be given to the inevitable re-entry into life back home. Energy expended in planning before the trip begins will be rewarded by increased benefits during the stay abroad and after the return home.

This fastback is written for the first-time or relatively inexperienced traveler. It can be used as a handbook for participants in organized groups or by independent travelers. Its audience includes adults as well as young people. The writer assumes a stay of several months or a year, although many of the ideas pertain to people whose study trip lasts for only a few weeks.

Benefits of Study Abroad

Far away places with strange-sounding names,
Far away over the sea;
Those far away places with the strange-sounding names
*Are calling, calling, me.**

Answering the call to travel may be part of a lifelong dream or it may be a whim, but the decision to go is only the first of many decisions for those who hope to benefit by increasing their knowledge of people and places, gaining and giving goodwill, enjoying new experiences, and receiving other dividends from the investment of their time and money.

Personal Flexibility. Foremost among the many benefits of study abroad are gains in personal flexibility. Experience in a culture different from one's own increases one's ability to accept people with different points of view. Individuals will grow in their tolerance of varying lifestyles, of different approaches to problems, and of cultural differences in time concepts and family relationships.

Political Awareness. People living abroad receive only selected news from their own countries. Much of this news deals with foreign policy, military and economic developments, deaths of well-known people, and natural disasters. Such news as filtered through the perceptions of the news media of the host country helps visitors see the politics of their own countries in a new perspective.

Ambassadorial Role. For better or for worse, all travelers are representatives of their native countries. Their behaviors and attitudes can reinforce either positive or negative stereotypes, build goodwill or illwill. Travelers also carry impressions away from their host countries. After returning home, the

* "Far Away Places." Words and music by Joan Whitney and Alex Kramer. Used by arrangement with G. Schirmer Inc.

information and attitudes they convey about the country can have a strong impact on behavior and attitudes of others.

Recognizing Worldwide Homogenization. Modern international marketing moves products all over the world. Blue jeans and T-shirts emblazoned with French phrases or U.S. college names are worn by young people everywhere; records and tapes of popular recording stars from many countries are heard on every continent. Fast-food services are found in all major cities; you can buy sushi in New York and Big Macs in Tokyo. Such homogenization may or may not be a contribution to world understanding and cultural progress, but it is part of the current international scene and an economic reality in today's world.

Decentering. When living abroad, people become immersed in daily life where both small and large acts differ from their native habits. By seeing and practicing different ways of doing ordinary daily chores and interacting with people in new ways, travelers soon realize that these ways have as much validity as those practiced at home. This cultural decentering promotes greater acceptance and deeper appreciation of differences among people from other cultures.

Contributing to Intercultural Understanding. Visitors in any country learn from nationals, but they also teach. Each person who spends time abroad has many opportunities to share knowledge and broaden the understanding of people who may never travel beyond their own neighborhoods.

Understanding Cultural Roots. Travel enables people to seek out the roots of their national or ethnic heritage. Americans of African descent may discover in certain African countries practices and attitudes similar to their own; those of Scottish ancestry may discover behaviors characteristic of families living in North America. Recognizing enduring cultural patterns and understanding differences in ethnic origins are other major reasons for visiting other countries.

Discovering Art and Architecture. Wherever people live, their dwellings, public buildings, and art express something of their world view. Museums and historical attractions present treasures of the past. Shops, galleries, and modern buildings represent the present. Seeing all of these increases knowledge and appreciation of human diversity in both ordinary and artistic endeavors.

Enhancing Career Opportunities. In a world of increasing international cooperation in business, education, and government, travel can enhance a variety of career possibilities. Firsthand experiences in different cultures and the ability to communicate effectively with people of different cultures are marketable assets.

Language Practice. Monolingualism in a multicultural world is a handicap. Individuals who speak and write other languages serve as bridges across linguistic and cultural barriers. Travel provides opportunities to practice a foreign language to increase fluency.

Establish Purposes and Set Goals

Travel is expensive in time, energy, and money. To gain the greatest return from these expenditures, travelers must establish purposes and clarify their goals. While a person may express a general purpose such as "to get to know the people and culture" or "to have an Oriental experience," more specific purposes will help to shape the experience and focus one's efforts.

In some cases the purpose may be predetermined. If formal course work for college credit is undertaken, successful completion of those courses will be a primary purpose. If informal study is planned (for example, to become familiar with the architecture of French cathedrals), the traveler must define the content to be learned and determine the amount to be included. Other purposes may be "to practice the language" or "to study the art." Whatever the purpose, if it is articulated, it will help the traveler to establish priorities and to plan specific activities.

For some, more personal goals may be important. They may want to see specific places such as Pompeii or the Colosseum in Rome. They may want to eat certain foods or visit relatives and friends. Any goal is legitimate as long as the traveler ensures that time and money allocations are sufficient and that preparations are adequate.

When the major purposes have been established, the traveler should consider how other experiences can be combined with the major events. A trip to Munich for the specific purpose of using the resources of the International Youth Library could also include visits to the stadium built for the 1972 Olympics and to Garmish-Partinkirkin to see the Olympic sites from the 1936 games.

Another possibility is to include professional international conferences in the itinerary.

Information about international conferences is announced early with calls for proposals for papers. Such gatherings are a good place to meet an international group of scholars in one's own discipline; and there is also the possibility of presenting a paper. Proposals for international conferences usually have a better chance for acceptance than for national or regional conferences because fewer people from each country can afford the long-distance travel.

With advance planning, it also is possible to give lectures and provide staff development in elementary and secondary schools and in colleges and universities in the host countries. Arranging for this takes contacts and often many months of communication, but the rewards in new experiences and new professional contacts are worth all the letters and telephone calls.

As you are planning your forthcoming trip, friends will offer suggestions and give you names of relatives and places to visit. Listen to everything, write to the people, follow up on the suggestions. Some people will answer, and those contacts could result in exciting experiences. Some may be disappointments, but your stay will be enriched by the broadened spectrum of possibilities.

Selecting Programs for Study Abroad

There are travel/study programs for every interest. Travelers need to know of many programs available in order to make wise choices. The sources of programs listed here are those that would be of interest to educators.

High school guidance counselors and foreign language and social studies teachers usually receive information about programs planned for secondary students or teachers. At universities, bulletin boards in many departments feature announcements of travel opportunities. Many of the professional education organizations send brochures to members announcing study tours.

Travel magazines such as *Travel and Leisure* and *Travel/Holiday* carry announcements and advertisements of trips not specifically related to academic disciplines.

The National Registration Center for Study Abroad is a coordination center committed to intercultural awareness and multilingualism through participation in academic programs abroad. It publishes annual directories for Latin America, Europe, Great Britain, and Ireland. These directories describe programs covering a wide range of study purposes: art, canoeing, gourmet eating, mountain trekking, archeology, language study, etc.

The Institute of International Education (IIE) administers educational exchange programs for U.S. and foreign students and other individuals sponsored by governments, corporations, foundations, education institutions, and private organizations. The agency also conducts studies and research in areas related to international education, conducts workshops and conferences in the U.S. and abroad, and publishes information materials for professional and public use.

Other sources of information are travel agencies, airline companies, and automobile associations, as well as school and public libraries.

Following are the addresses of selected organizations that sponsor or offer information on travel/study abroad:

Phi Delta Kappa
Box 789
Eighth Street and Union Avenue
Bloomington, IN 47402

National Education Association
1201 Sixteenth Street, N.W.
Washington, DC 20036

National Council of Teachers of English
1111 Kenyon Road
Urbana, IL 61801

International Reading Association
800 Barksdale Road
P. O. Box 8139
Newark, DE 19714

National Council for the Social Studies
3501 Newark Street, N.W.
Washington, DC 20016

National Registration Center for Study Abroad
823 North 2nd Street
Milwaukee, WI 53203

International Funding Guide
American Association of State Colleges and Universities
Suite 700
One Dupont Circle
Washington, DC 20036

Institute of International Education
809 United Nations Plaza
New York, NY 10017

Fulbright Scholar Program Award Abroad
Council for International Exchange of Scholars
Eleven Dupont Circle, N.W.
Washington, DC 20036

International Council on Education for Teaching
One Dupont Circle
Suite 616
Washington, DC 20036

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Gaining Background for Travel Abroad

Going to China or maybe Siam
I wanna see for myself
Those far away places I've been reading about
In a book that I took from a shelf.

Once the decision to travel has been made, the need for background information will become apparent. Hazy ideas about geography will need clarification; romantic abstractions will need to be made concrete. Weather and climate become important, as do the customs of the people and the travel conditions.

Read to Build Background. Use the facilities of school, university, and public libraries for travel books and magazines. Study the literature available from travel agencies. Book stores carry a variety of specialized paperbacks on different countries. Purchase those with detailed information to carry on the journey.

Background reading should include the history of the country, beginning with a broad survey and moving to current conditions. Augment your history reading with current periodicals such as *National Geographic*.

Read a classic novel or two from the country, also biographies of the country's famous people. Listen to classical music and read about the famous composers. Review music books for folk songs or dances of the country.

Read folk tales or legends from the country. Sample poetry by native poets to see if the themes and subject matter are distinctive to the culture. Read some children's poetry for perceptions of attitudes toward children and childhood in general.

Reference books and encyclopedias are sources of useful facts. Look for current events in magazines, newspapers, and other periodicals. You may want to consider subscribing to a national magazine (*Ireland of the Welcomes, Britain Today, Paris Match*) for six months or a year.

Contact Your Local Ethnic Organizations. If there are groups (Young Lithuanians, Sons of Italy, etc.) in your area that celebrate their heritage, try to arrange to meet members and, if invited, to attend their social gatherings. Offer to look up relatives or to bring back mementos of the country. Visit the places they remember or recommend, and take pictures for them. While you are traveling, talk with people you meet and tell them about their kinfolk in North America.

Learn Some Basic Language. Even if you do not speak the language and do not intend to learn it, secure some phrase books or instructional tapes with beginning conversation and important phrases. You will have to learn some introductory words and phrases eventually; and it may as well be before you go. Try to learn something about the history of the language and its relationships within the families of languages.

Take a travel dictionary with English and the target language equivalencies. Use it to decode menus, read signs, and to point to words when you are lost or desperate.

Plan for Internal Travel. In estimating the costs of study abroad, transportation to your country of destination will be a major item in your budget. However, it will be false economy if you do not also budget funds for internal travel in the country. It is a small percentage of your total investment and will provide a much broader view of the country. Think of what foreign travelers' view of the U.S. would be if they spent their time only in New York City.

Buy a good map of the country in which you will be living, as well as one of the surrounding countries. Review the travel possibilities for special seasons of the year, so you can plan the best times for traveling into each part of the country. Obtain reservations if they are necessary.

Learn about efficient and economical means of public transportation and the kinds of tickets you can purchase before leaving your own country. There are tickets with youth fares, with time restrictions, with distance limitations; there are discounts for families with children and for senior citizens. Each has advantages depending on the purpose, but no one ticket will be best for all of your travel.

Railway travel in Europe is convenient, comfortable, efficient, and economical. If you plan to use trains, buy a current, in-season copy of the national schedules. Learn to read it. Study the offers for best rates, identify first-class

trains, and note optimum travel times. There are times when traveling second-class on a first-class train can be a very wise travel buy; but traveling second-class on a second-class train is almost always a third-class choice. If you do have to take such a train, fortify yourself with a smile, food, beverages, and patience. You will need them all.

Railway travel in Japan has a well-deserved reputation for excellence. With just a beginning level in reading kanji, you can travel unaided from one end of the country to the other. Train travel in China and the Soviet Union varies in different parts of these vast countries. Talk to people who have used the trains and ask about the current situation. For specific information about railway travel in the countries you plan to visit, inquire at travel agencies or tourist bureaus. Addresses are available in travel magazines or in travel guide books.

Make a list of the major points of interest you would like to visit by consulting travel books, such as the Fodor guides and others that are available in the travel section of your local library. Make a tentative plan so that your private excursions can be coordinated with your study program schedule. Talk with the person in charge of planning trips for your program to give yourself lead time for making your own arrangements and for budgeting money and time.

A well-rounded program of travel should include ancient historic sights, modern cities, and possibly a seaside resort. For variety, include in your itinerary localities not usually frequented by tourists. Try to find spots of natural beauty and simplicity to furnish perspective and contrast to your life in a major city or academic center.

Plan to participate in great regional celebrations and religious festivals, such as the Holy Week processions in Spain, Italy, or other predominately Roman Catholic countries; the celebrations for the dead in Buddhist countries; All Hallows' Day in Mexico; the Snow Festival in Sapporo, Japan; New Year's and Winter festivals everywhere; or the unparalleled burning of the Fallas on the birthday of St. Joseph in Valencia, Spain. Each of these seasonal festivals is a unique manifestation of the customs of the country, and will be found nowhere else in the world. Don't miss them.

Keeping in Touch

Living in a different country, meeting new people, trying out new foods, speaking a different language are all exciting experiences. Nevertheless, most of us need contact with folks back home for the peace of mind that comes with the familiar, the commonplace that friends, family, and professional colleagues can provide.

Letters. If you expect to receive letters from home, you will have to take the initiative. Concentrate on those who are likely to write and forget the rest. Provide them with itineraries and addresses so that they do not have to wait to hear from you before they write. Do your share by sending post cards if you do not have time for letters.

Establish a routine for your letter writing. Write immediately after a major event, while details and images are still sharp in your mind. Begin the letter by writing up the event as you would in a journal. Then on a separate paper, write comments to personalize the piece. Make copies of the first part and send it with the personalized second page to the different people on your mailing list.

Another way to use the same message more than once is to write with carbon paper. Explain to your correspondents why you are doing this (to save time). Most people will understand, and they will enjoy hearing about your travel adventures, even if they are shared with others. If you have friends and family who can exchange letters, use a serial method by writing about one event for one family member and the next event for another. Keep a record of the sequence so you can vary it.

Notebook. Even if you do not intend to keep an official journal, use a notebook for recording events, addresses, names, places. Details of memorable events will blur once you have returned home. With basic information in a notebook, you will have a source to which you can refer when making slide presentations, giving lectures, writing articles, or simply refreshing your memory.

Personal Computer and Tape Recorder. If you intend to do extensive writing while abroad, you may want to bring one of the new, portable personal computers and printer and a tape recorder. A computer simplifies letter writing since you can make multiple originals with added paragraphs for particular individuals. With a tape recorder you can make on-the-spot notes and conduct interviews. The computer discs and tapes provide quick retrieval of information you need for immediate writing or for writing when you return home. With careful packing, you can put a tape recorder, computer, printer, discs, paper, tapes, and all connections in a carry-on bag.

Telephone. Learn the details of telephone rates, credit card use, and the best times for reduced rates for international calls. Telephone rates can differ vastly, depending on the country in which the call originates. Also, calls from hotels or with credit cards may require significant surcharges. Know these details before you dial.

Finances Are Fundamental

Detailed information about financing travel for study is beyond the scope of this fastback. But money is important, especially when you are out of the country and away from your regular banking services. It is frightening to be away from home without money and without the means of getting any. People accustomed to getting ready cash by writing a check or using a card in a money machine will need to plan carefully in terms of cash flow and cash availability.

Travelers Checks. You can usually use travelers checks to exchange for the currency of your destination countries, but be certain that the kind you purchase will be accepted in the countries in which you will be living. Buy several denominations. Larger denominations ($50 or $100) are better for obtaining cash for longer stays in a country. Smaller denominations can be used for purchasing gifts in cities that have a lot of tourist shops.

Credit Cards. Major credit cards can be used for hotels and shopping in cities around the world, but there is tremendous variation in which cards are accepted and which places will accept them. Depending on your destination and the purchases you expect to make, you will want to have several cards, as well as other sources of money for living expenses and shopping.

It is possible to secure cash by using the cash-advance feature of some credit cards. The interest rate, the limit on the amount of money, and the time delay varies with every card, every country, and every bank. The waiting time for securing cash from credit cards is less than for cashing personal checks. Sometimes there is no waiting time; sometimes it may take hours or even days. Nevertheless, it is a good, albeit expensive, emergency system. Select a bank where you regularly exchange travelers checks and inquire about the credit

card cash-advance policy and interest rates. Should a financial emergency arise, you will have a known source of money and information about its cost.

Securing Additional Cash. More critical than having travelers checks for initial currency is a system for replenishing the money supply. One option is to open an account at a bank with international branches and arrange for periodic deposits. If you are on an automatic payroll deposit plan, and those deposits will continue while you are gone, check into the possibility of transferring them to an account in your host country.

Do not rely on personal or payroll checks from home. In most situations, those checks must be deposited and the money held until verification of sufficient funds is received from the bank on which the check is drawn. This process can take from 30 to 60 days.

In some countries, postal money orders or registered cashier's checks can be cashed immediately. In others, they are treated like personal checks, with a 30- to 60-day clearance period.

Money Available to All. When traveling abroad, be certain that all members of the family have money. Travelers checks in approximately equal amounts should be purchased and carried by all adults, even if one person pays most of the bills. This ensures that no one will be without money should another become ill or be absent for an extended period of time. For the same reasons, credit cards and the currency of the country should be available to all adults and to children who may have need of them.

All travelers should learn the currency exchange of the host country and practice using coins and bills. It is inconsiderate to expect salespeople to wait while you fumble with unfamiliar bills and coins. Memorize denominations and equivalents or carry a small card to help you compute amounts quickly.

Telephone Credit Cards. Telephone credit cards are now widely accepted in many parts of the world. They can be used at public pay stations and with hotel and home telephones. They provide a source of communication and security; and you do not have to use your available currency.

Arranging for Official Documents

Citizens who travel outside their country must carry official documentation of nationality and citizenship.

Passports. A passport, the most commonly used document, certifies citizenship of the holder and ensures your right to lawful aid and protection by a foreign government. Passports are issued by the Department of State in the United States and by the Department of External Affairs in Canada. Applications for first passports in the U.S. are available from U.S. Post Offices. Passports are now valid for 10 years. A passport may be renewed by sending the expired passport, a recent photo, and a $35 fee to the address listed inside the first passport.

In Canada passports are valid for five years; there are no renewals. Addresses of two major Canadian passport offices are:

Passport Office
Department of External Affairs
6th Floor, Place du Centre
200 Promenade du Portage
Hull, Quebec K1A-0G3

Passport Office
Department of External Affairs
125 Sussex Drive
Lester B. Pearson Building
Ottawa, Ontario K1A-0G3

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Visas. Visas, the official endorsement by the consulate of a country to be visited, are required for travel to many countries. In some instances, these visas are merely a formality; in others the process of securing one is long and complicated. When people travel together in an organized group, there may be a group visa, which is held by the group director. Individuals traveling independently must secure and carry the appropriate visas.

Since visa regulations vary from country to country and change with political climate, it is wise to apply early. Inquire about the best time to make application, what information is required, and what kind of visa is needed. When you have the information, follow instructions exactly. When a question arises, telephone the nearest consulate of the country of destination and speak with a person responsible for issuing visas. They are informed and helpful. Even if you are working through a travel agency, you may want to verify this information on your own.

Birth Certificates. You must have a valid passport before you can secure a visa, and you must have a birth certificate in order to secure a passport. In most cases, baptismal, family bible, and other unofficial records are not recognized for passport purposes. Birth certificates can be obtained from the courthouse in your county of birth. Begin the passport and visa application process early (six months) to allow time for the responsible agencies to complete their work. During busy travel seasons, passport agencies require months to process the applications and return the document.

Notify Officials. If you plan to be out of the country for an extended period of time, you may choose to notify your representatives in Congress. A letter giving your name, address, purpose of stay, and length of stay is sufficient. You may also choose to register with the American consulate in the country in which you are living. Some countries require foreigners to register if they stay beyond certain established lengths of time. When this is the case, you will be so informed by customs officials as you enter the country. You may want to carry extra passport photos for this purpose and for securing extra visas should you decide to visit other countries while you are abroad.

Memories of Your Travels

For memories of your trip, photographs and slides are natural choices for most people. If the camera you will use is new to you, practice with a couple rolls of film to learn all the features of the camera and to ensure that it is operating properly.

If your trip lasts more than a few weeks, plan to have film developed immediately. This allows you to review and identify each shot and gives time for retakes (if needed) and time to have copies made to share with new-found friends. If it is not possible to develop film as it is exposed, keep a record of dates, names of people in the photos, and pertinent data on the scenes photographed. Your memory is fallible; specific details will be forgotten unless you have some notes to prompt recall.

If you are one who does not enjoy the prospect of carrying camera equipment around the world, or if you are fearful of cameras in general, you can still keep a good record of your travels by buying attractive postcards at each place you visit.

Photograph Album. Plan to purchase an album – the kind with lift-up clear plastic overlays – for your prints, postcards, and brochures. The album provides an easy way to organize these small items that might otherwise get lost or misplaced. It can serve as a conversation starter when new friends visit you and want to know what you have seen of their country. It also is a convenient way when you return home to share your experiences with friends who have neither the time nor the inclination to view your 300 slides.

Gifts to Buy. Make a list of people you want to remember with gifts when you return home, especially those who have been helpful to you during your

preparation period, those who will never be able to have the experience you are having, or someone who needs encouragement to plan such a trip. Small tokens from far away are an appropriate way to express your appreciation. During the trip, be on the lookout for easy-to-pack items for people on this list.

Keeping a Journal. If you do not keep a journal, plan to start one. Record your experiences while they are fresh, using a combination of phrases, words, and ideas. This is your personal journal, so you need not write in complete sentences or worry about subject-verb agreement. Writing a journal sharpens your awareness of details, makes you take time for reflection, and creates an invaluable record. Just record your feelings and impressions. If you have difficulty finding time to write in your journal, remember that there are always spare moments to use during train rides, plane trips, and while waiting in airports or railway stations.

Letters. Plan to keep copies of your letters home, either by duplicating them (copy machines are available in most cities) or by making carbon copies. Keeping copies will give you a record of events while they are fresh and will eliminate your writing the same thing more than once.

What to Take

I start getting restless whenever I hear
The whistle of a train
I pray for the day I can get underway
And look for those castles in Spain.

With airline ticket, passport, visa, and itinerary in hand, you are ready to start packing. Some important decisions and compromises have to be made.

Luggage. A rule of thumb of experienced travelers is that you carry only what you can handle yourself. Therefore, limit yourself to two pieces or, if you are using a luggage cart, three. If you need more than you can get into this amount of space, send it by Sea Mail. Information on this form of mail is available at a post office. Allow eight weeks shipping time.

You need to think about the shape, size, weight, and handles of the luggage you plan to carry, and its compatibility with the means of transportation you will use most frequently. For example, if trains will be your major means of transportation, bags with shoulder straps are best because they allow you to have your hands free to help you swing up or down the steep steps of railway cars.

Softsided bags work best in many situations because you can stuff more into them and they are easy to stow. Realize that no one bag is appropriate for all traveling. Select the right one for each trip, even if it means leaving a good one at home. Small fold-up bags can be tucked into a larger suitcase for use when accumulated purchases exceed available space in your suitcases.

Clothing. Be conservative in planning your wardrobe. Most first-time travelers take too many clothes. For men, four shirts, three pairs of trousers, a sweater, a suit or a sport jacket, a raincoat, and a hat will suffice. For women, a suit, four blouses or tops, a skirt, a dress, a sweater, a pair of slacks, a

raincoat, and a hat are enough. Underclothing for three days is enough; plan to launder at night. Leave the jewelry, scarves, and ornaments at home. You will see such items that you want to buy; they can be worn immediately to add variety to your attire and serve as mementos or gifts later. Luxury clothing is inappropriate in countries where the majority of the population is poor.

Shoes. Travel involves sightseeing that requires walking, and much of that walking can be on rough or rugged terrain. Comfortable shoes are essential – at least three pairs that can be worn all day, every day. Think comfort not style. Take with you whatever footwear you will need, because many North Americans have difficulty finding shoes to fit in other countries because of last and size differences.

Snapshots. Take a few pictures of your home showing the garden and lawn as well as inside views; also snapshots of your family, including parents, brothers and sisters, your children, spouse, or special friend. Include some snapshots of social gatherings at holidays and other festive occasions that show you in your own setting. People you meet in your travels will be interested in your family and the way you live. Photographs of ordinary people in commonplace activities help to overcome stereotypes and false impressions of North Americans, and they serve as a bridge for communicating across language barriers.

Gifts. Take with you small, inexpensive, easily packed items that represent you, your interests, or your region. Maps, paperback books and pamphlets, and picture postcards featuring special places or people are good general examples; but every region of your country offers something unique, which, when given as a token of friendship, will contribute to understanding across language and cultural differences.

If you are going to a country where ownership of cameras is rare for common people (for example, People's Republic of China), take an instant camera for snapshots of places and people (especially children), and give them a print. However, *never* take pictures of people without their permission; and if they are reluctant or shy, do not persist.

Coping with Daily Life

They call me a dreamer; well, maybe I am
but I know what I'm burning to see
Those far away places with the strange-sounding names
Calling, calling me.

When staying in a country for an extended period, the initial excitement of travel eventually gives way to the routine of everyday life. Making each day a rich and rewarding experience requires an openness to the unexpected, a willingness to learn, and a flexible stance. The suggestions that follow have been gathered from people who have lived abroad (in Europe, Asia, and Australia) in study situations.

Hasten Decentering. Forget the terms "better" and "worse" when comparing cultures. Simply think "different." Do not monopolize conversations with anecdotes about the way it is back home. Offer information about home only when asked and expand on it only if listeners seem eager for more. Keep comparisons to yourself.

Buy where nationals shop. In most large cities, there are department stores and shops that cater to tourists. Limit your purchases at these establishments if you want to live as nationals do. If possible, live with a native family if only for a few days or a week. This will enable you to observe and to ask questions about home life.

Seek Out Natives. Most travelers state that they want to know the native people and their way of life. But for that to happen requires a reasonable amount of assertiveness. Begin by accepting any invitation to any event. Even if you have never attended a judo match in your life, go if you are invited. Do not delay an invitation. If someone says, "You must come for dinner soon," reply, "I'd like to do that and have a free evening next Tuesday." That response may seem aggressive, but it is often appropriate. In some cultures it is expected

that the visitor indicate interest in the relationship by suggesting a date for getting together.

With people with whom you will be working or studying, explain what you expect, ask what they expect. Be alert to their schedules and deadlines. Do not be afraid to ask for details. Gather background information before an event; but if you cannot get it, relax and enjoy yourself. If you make a mistake that cannot be ignored, laugh at yourself. If an apology is in order, make it and then forget it. Remember what to do the next time. People will accept the fact that you need help in complex social situations and usually will offer it kindly.

Talk with people, initiate conversations whenever possible. Be ready with the greeting of the day. Watch the faces of people; if they look at you as though they want to speak, greet them. This provides an opening for further conversation. Even if you are traveling as a family or as a twosome, go out alone occasionally. It is easier for others to start talking with someone who is alone.

Respond to children. Parents like to see their children treated with kindness and respect. You can meet interesting adults through their children, as well as enjoying the young. Attend sports and cultural events to meet people with mutual interests. Rise early to exercise or jog and meet people who do the same.

Ask for help with everyday things when you need it. Take time to watch people and observe how they accomplish the small tasks of daily life. Be alert to the gestures and nonverbal communication of the people.

Seek out opportunities to spend time with citizens of the host country. Attend public events in parks, go to exhibits that explain the culture of the country to foreigners. If someone offers to do something for you, accept even if it seems to you that they are spending a lot of time in your behalf. People in some countries (for example, Spain and Japan) pride themselves on their helpfulness to foreigners.

Be Adventuresome with Food. There is no better way to savor a culture than through its foods. Every country has its unique cuisine. Make an effort to become acquainted with the specialities of the region. Buy food in neighborhood shops where natives shop. Ask for help in selecting items and for cooking instructions.

In restaurants, order national specialties. If the food turns out to be not to your liking, at least sample it and avoid commenting. When you are served

foods you do not recognize or do not know how to eat, inquire about them but avoid sarcastic comments. And remember your facial expressions can be understood even when your language is not. Learn to use the eating utensils (chopsticks) and observe the table manners of the country to avoid calling attention to yourself.

Continue Your Reading. Save some time for reading. You will find that books on art, history, and geography now have more relevance. Poetry and traditional literature will take on richer meaning. Purchase books you cannot obtain in your own country.

Deciding What to Wear. Dress according to the standards of the community. If shorts or pants are not acceptable for women, do not wear them. If ties and suits are common apparel for men, wear them. You will be less conspicuous and be more accepted if you dress as the general population does.

Contact with Other North Americans. An occasional gathering with fellow North Americans to discuss mutual problems can be therapeutic. However, be careful not to ridicule the people and customs of the country in the presence of nationals. No matter how delicately you express yourself, it is in bad taste.

Coping with Living Quarters. Finding temporary living quarters is a prime concern if you are staying in a country for any length of time. It is this aspect of living abroad that will probably create the greatest culture shock and require the most adjustment on your part. But keep in mind that the situation is *temporary.*

Your quarters probably will not be as spacious as your own home, nor will you find all the appliances you take for granted. Space is at a premium in many countries, and homes and apartments are often small by your standards. There may be restrictions on the use of hot water. The hot water system may operate on a "need" basis rather than the endless supply you are used to in the U.S. and Canada. Likewise, cooking may be restricted to certain hours to conserve gas. Home lighting may be less abundant, with lamps turned on only when they are needed.

Energy-conscious people around the world have devised means to conserve fuel and water. These practices reflect conscious decisions, not lack of technology. Accept them in the spirit that if an entire nation follows these practices, they must have some validity.

When living in temporary quarters, adjustment is necessary, deprivation is not. Determine what is essential for your personal well-being and either bring it along or find a substitute. If music is a necessary condition for your survival, your four-track stereo sound system may be out of the question; but you can make do with a cassette recorder. If you must read in bed and no bed lamp is provided, buy an inexpensive one. These small conveniences give your temporary home a personal touch.

Coping with Stress. Living in situations where customs are different can cause stress. Such simple tasks as mailing letters, counting change, or boarding a bus take time and concentration, while at home they would be automatic.

Coping with traffic can be traumatic. Negotiating a street crossing used by bicyclists, animal- or human-drawn conveyances, as well as cars and trucks, can be a perilous undertaking. Regulations governing traffic flow may be confusing. In countries where the traffic moves on the left side of the road rather than on the right, it is easy to become disoriented.

In social situations, questions arise about appropriate forms of address. Travelers may feel self-conscious and worry about responding awkwardly or being thought to be rude. Any of these situations contribute to stress.

There are several small things to do to cope with stress. In the early days of the stay when everything is new, plan for rest during the day and for more sleep at night until a routine becomes established. If you find yourself becoming irritable, practice relaxation techniques and spend a little time alone until your balance is restored. Know your own physical limitations and plan your schedule accordingly.

Recognize that the pace of life while traveling is bound to be stressful and allow time for preparation and reflection between major events. Learn to recognize signs of stress in yourself, and adjust your plans until the stress is reduced. Work to establish a routine that includes balanced nutrition, sleep, work, play, and exercise.

The Final Weeks Abroad

As your travel/study experience approaches its final weeks, planning for the ending and the subsequent re-entry into life back home is as important as planning for the travel adventure itself.

The final days in your temporary home are a mixture of sorrow and anticipation. Breaking off new friendships when they have only begun to flourish is balanced by the anticipation of seeing family and old friends again. Forsaking newly discovered food delights is offset by looking forward to favorite recipes from home. The secret is to cherish the waning days, to rejoice in each event and, at the same time, to plan for the next stage.

Look at your calendar. Find time to schedule the activities you have missed. Take in as many as you can without exhausting yourself. Plan small informal meetings with friends and colleagues, even if you will see them at farewell parties, for final conversations and to exchange the important ideas you still want to share. If you plan to give gifts, do it during these informal meetings.

Write to the people at home you want to see immediately. Establish a leisurely schedule to meet with the special individuals or couples. Save the big parties until after you have had your private conversations, recovered from jet lag, and recuperated from culture shock.

Answer any letters that you have laid aside. People who take time to write want to hear from you while you are still a traveler. Review letters you have received to determine if you have answered all requests for souvenirs, errands, or purchases. Remember your faithful letter writers and tuck in small gifts for them.

Bring your photograph album up to date. Label the prints, postcards, and mementos. Look through the names and addresses you have accumulated to be certain that they are complete and correctly spelled. If you want a list of birthdays, anniversaries, or holiday dates, gather them now.

Buy any items you truly want; you will likely not be returning soon. Even if you are on a budget, try to purchase something of exceptional quality, which represents, for you, a major feature of the culture.

List the book titles and authors you still want to read. If you are not certain you can find them in local libraries, and you want to own the book, buy it now in paperback. Look for recently published books on the country, which will almost certainly not be in North American bookstores or libraries. These will evoke in you a sense of time and place and will help others to understand your experiences and feelings.

Pick up several inexpensive gifts that can be given to anyone. You can encourage young people's interest in other peoples of the world by bringing them something from far-away places. Keep a few coins to give to fledgling numismatists; take stamps to stamp collectors.

Spend time thinking about the big ideas you want to share. Living in a new culture has taught you something about that culture. Your ideas and attitudes have changed; stereotypes have been modified. You may have some impressions that cannot be easily explained to people who lack the background to understand. Write an entry in your journal that summarizes your feelings.

If you plan to make slide presentations of your travels, record music now to provide for authentic background for your narration. Review your slides to ensure that you have everyday street scenes and ordinary people as well as the exotic places. Take pictures of your living quarters, inside and out, of your neighborhood, and of the nearby restaurant you enjoyed.

Visit the favorite haunts you have come to cherish. Mark in your memory the vision of the mountains, the rivers, and the sunsets you have come to love. Tell your neighbors, the clerks, waiters, and shoe repairman who have served you that you are leaving. Leave a memento if you can.

Pack and ship purchases you cannot carry with you. In some countries, it is possible to send suitcases in advance to the airport where they will be held for your arrival. Check this possibility. Buy an inexpensive suitcase if needed for last-minute purchases.

Confirm flight plans with the airline several weeks in advance and again

within 48 hours of your scheduled flight. Make your last day quiet and restful. Sleep late and eat lightly. Plan to arrive at the airport in plenty of time to clear customs and exchange remaining currency.

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Preparing for Re-entry

Home is the place where,
When you have to go there,
They have to take you in.

– Robert Frost, "Death of the Hired Man"

During the flight home, you will have time to reflect about life as you left it. If this is your first trip abroad, you may be in for some surprises as you make your re-entry.

While you were gone, life went on. Your friends and family had to fill your space with other people and activities. You must now take back the space you left, learn what has happened to them, share what has happened to you. The return of a person who has been absent for a long period takes adjustment for everyone.

In your first contacts, do not expect to unload on your friends everything you have experienced. Take time to remember the details of their life, their personal concerns. Check on current pressures. Inquire about their news before you interject yours. Be sure to get in touch with those who were faithful writers. The next time you travel, you will want their letters, too.

On Touch Down. Brace yourself. When you arrive at your local airport, you will be tired, maybe hungry, sleepy, or disoriented. You will be thinking of such pleasantries as familiar food and dear people. But it is also possible that you will be met with bad news, the kind nobody wanted to write in a letter to worry you. The windshield of your car just broke; the basement is flooded; your bank account is overdrawn; your cat died, but not before the veterinarian tried to save it to the tune of $250. Eat a light meal, get a good night's sleep, and forget about them until later.

The first days back you will no doubt suffer from jet lag. Your sleep pattern may be disrupted; dreams may be troubled. Be good to yourself during this time. Continue to eat lightly and curtail drinking of alcoholic beverages. Es-

tablish a normal waking and sleeping schedule, trying not to take naps that will continue to keep your sleep in the patterns of the place you just left. If your physical activity has been neglected during your stay away, establish times to visit a gym, health spa, or swimming pool.

If the purpose of your visit has been to learn a language, make plans to continue with the practice of that language. Your hard-won skills will slip away if you neglect them. If your interest in language study has been whetted, enroll now in beginning courses or begin practicing with tape cassettes.

Build "follow-up" time into your schedule to write letters to the new friends you have left behind, to keep promises you made, to send books and other information.

Get in touch with people you know who have traveled to the same countries you have. They will be eager to compare notes and will appreciate certain anecdotes that you do not want to share with everyone. Contact local nationals. Share with them recent newspapers and magazines you have brought from their country.

Continue reading background books and articles about the culture. Get out the list you made in the final weeks and begin working through it. Accept invitations to show your slides or to give talks.

Find ways to make mementos part of your environment: hang the pictures, wear the jewelry, drink the wine while you listen to the music and look at the snapshots. Incorporate the best of your experiences into your work or home life. Begin writing the article or book you have planned; cook a meal and serve it in traditional style. Put into practice those aspects of the culture you want to keep in your life. If you wish to adopt the Japanese custom of removing shoes in your home, be prepared to explain the custom to friends, so they will understand this characteristic of the other culture you appreciate.

To your dismay, you may discover that you have difficulty articulating subtleties of the culture you have visited. What seemed clear to you while you were immersed in the daily routine of another culture does not translate well once you return home. You may also find that part of you is unwilling to give up what you enjoyed abroad. You may find yourself being critical of aspects of your own culture. It may take some effort on your part to be as accepting of your fellow citizens as you were of the people in the country you just left. Accept these ambiguous feelings and begin to set new goals. Start planning your next trip.

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